

## Bucharest joins London, Hong Kong and Singapore in launching first Visa debit contactless card with mass transit application

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**29.06.2011**

**Romania is the first country in CEE to roll the contactless card with transport application**

**Advanced technology allows customers to pay for tube or bus fare by swiping card on a card-reader and use it for other payments**

**BCR Visa card has safer and stronger security system than any other contactless card across Europe**

Banca Comerciala Romana (BCR), the largest Romanian bank by assets - member of Erste Group Bank - issues the first contactless debit card with mass transit application in Europe. The card bears the Visa label and comes with a loyalty programme for the cardholders.

The BCR contactless card uses the same technology as Transport for London's Oyster cards - which allows travellers in the Romanian capital to pay for their Tube or bus fare by simply swiping their card past a card-reader. The bank worked in conjunction with Bucharest Transport Company to allow travellers to combine their debit and regular transport cards into the same piece of plastic.

"BCR is one of the 40 Visa Europe member banks that issue at present contactless cards. It is a testimony that banks in Europe's emerging markets can build products which leverage the newest technology and represent models of insight to those operating in more advanced markets," commented Bilge Burak, Head of Group Card Management, Erste Group.

The "Smile" programme - as the card is marked by the bank - provides the 1.9 million citizens of Bucharest with the opportunity to own the first debit contactless card with a Mifare transit application in the world. In the same time, it will allow BCR's customers to enjoy the convenience of contactless payments at merchants and on their preferred means of transportation. The cardholders benefit from a very rewarding loyalty scheme when using the card at various merchants (regardless of the acquiring bank).

By using the BCR Smile card, consumers are allowed to make payments of EUR 25 or less without having to even remove the card from their wallet. The card can be used across Europe at any card reader equipped for contactless technology.

While the number of cards issued at market level is satisfactory, the cards usage at merchants is still low. The BCR product is a relevant offer for Bucharest citizens and has the potential to boost cards usage at merchants are offered the rewards scheme and the transport application which will trigger daily usage.